No. 27

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

Price 10¢

While Ruth always remained lady-like in her demeanor, nevertheless she liked admiration. She always singled out handsome men. And when she caught a handsome man staring at her, she rewarded him with a smile.

R. of M. G., No. 27.

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Cincinnati, Ohio.

PHIL GORDON and his father-in-law, John Procter, had been talking about the finding of Marie, Phil's first wife. The statement was made as to the embarrassing position they would be placed in, if she was located. Naturally Phil would have to divorce his first wife and said so to old John Procter, who immediately sided in with Phil, saying Alice never deserved a man like Phil.

To this the latter shook his head dubiously.

"Do you suppose she would consent to a divorce?" he inquired.

"She'll have to," came back quickly. "She'll have no choice."

"And you would suggest such a proceeding, dad?"

"Indeed, I would," the old man exclaimed, something like wrath in his eyes. "And my daughter will have to submit whether she is willing or not. I know what kind of a game she has been playing with that cad Willard Parker.

"I had them shadowed and I have the positive evidence that she met him at the Walling Tea Room in Chicago. You know what kind of a place that is, Phil. No self-respecting married woman would allow herself to be seen there."

Gordon stared at the speaker, aghast.

"You—you had them shadowed?" he gasped.

John Procter nodded grimly.

"Do you suspect — but no, I don't believe Alice could be capable of so far forgetting herself." Gordon stared into space.

"What my suspicions are I won't tell you, my boy," the other declared solemnly. "But you may depend upon it that Alice will not contest your suit for an absolute divorce."

Phil buried his face in his hands and groaned a-

loud. It seemed that the thing he had tried so hard to avoid was now inevitable.

And yet he strove with all his mind against it. Another scandal would be a calamity he could not survive.

"Listen to me, dad," he said, his voice hoarse, "I refuse to believe that Alice had an affair with Parker. She may have been impudent and reckless to a degree, but she has one redeeming feature, and that is pride."

"Oh, yes, she is proud enough," John Procter admitted grudingly.

"And if you have the least feeling for me, do not speak of what you know, to any other living soul," Gordon pleaded. "If the worst comes to the worst, let me handle the situation. Will you do that?"

The old man promised and quitted the room with a grunt of disgust.

Phil remained in the library lost in the most disagreeable reflections. He could not understand why John Procter so thoroughly disliked and mistrusted his daughter. There had been bad blood between them, he knew.

But who had ever heard of a father deliberately doubting his daughter's good character to the extent of having her shadowed.

The usual dinner hour found him still pacing the floor. Hour after hour passed, and he could not think of sleep.

Finally he went upstairs to his room. He had hardly begun to undress when he heard an automobile coming up the drive.

Going over to the window, he saw a taxi standing at the door. What did it mean? Who had come to call on him at this late hour?

Hurrying downstairs he opened the door. The unexpected visitor proved to be a woman. She was ex-

pensively gowned and a heavy veil hid her face.

"May I——" he began, then stopped. To his boundless surprise he found himself staring at his wife. "Alice!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it is I," she said, removing the veil deftly.

For a long moment he continued to stare at her. What had happened? Why this frightful change? Alice's face was haggard with deep, dark circles under her eyes. Furrows ran across her usually smooth brow.

"Well, why do you stand there and look at me like that?" she demanded with characteristic impatience. "Does my unexpected arrival inconvenience you in any way?"

"Not that," Phil hastened to rejoin. "But why didn't you let me know you were coming home?"

"What difference would that have made?" she exclaimed with a shrug of her shoulders. "Surely you would not have come to meet me at the station. The world knows that I am a mere nobody in this house."

Phil regarded her in silence.

"You always like to jump at the wrong conclusion," he said at last. "Had I been free to do so, I would have met you, had I known you were coming. But as it is——"

"Oh, yes," she broke in vehemently as she took off her hat and threw it upon the hall-rack, "you are so devoted to your children and that governess of theirs. You could not bear to leave them."

"The children and Miss Desmond do not require my attention, though they will always have my devotion," he returned coldly. "I sent them down south a few days ago for an indefinite stay. The boy needed a change of climate badly and the doctor——"

Again she interrupted him.

"Certainly," Alice sneered. "I don't think you

were half as much worried about the boy as you were about this Miss Desemond. Oh, you need not stare at me with those murderous eyes. I have not been blind entirely. I knew what was going on between you two. Well, don't forget, two can play at that game."

Gordon made a move to stay his wife's progress, but she slipped past him and ran up the stairs, uttering a malicious laugh.

Chapter 86

BOB HARDING

TROUBLE was brewing at the Michigan State's prison. There were rumors of mutiny and a general uprising among the convicts. During recreation hours groups of prisoners could be seen prowling about the corridors conversing in low tones which were hushed suddenly whenever a guard drew near. Extra precautions were being taken by the chief warden to thwart any hostile move by the convicts.

So far everything seemed serene, but an undercurrent of restlessness could be noticed among certain prisoners, most of them were "lifers."

Threats were made against several guards, whose brutal treatment was directly responsible for the bitter resentment which existed.

Quite frequently prisoners were handled like cattle. Harsh treatment has never been a cure for human weaknesses.

It is the breeder of rebellion and anarchy. But the ignorant and often bestial guards regarded force as the best weapon to subjugate prisoners.

A good many complaints had been made by inmates confined at this prison. An investigation was promised, but never carried out. And so conditions grew from bad to worse.

The least infraction of a prison rule meant solitary confinement in a dark cell with a diet of dry bread and water.

The guilty onese were denied the privilege of seeing their friends and relatives who came to visit them

at stated periods.

Trinkets and little valuables which had become dear to prisoners were confiscated by these brutal guards and ruthlessly destroyed.

But these were not the worse punishments by any means. There were quite a few men who bore the marks of personal violence on their bodies.

When a guard, for some reason, took a dislike to a certain convict, he subjected him to the most vile treatment in order to vent his spite.

Brutal assaults had become daily occurrences. Those who were made to suffer told their fellow inmates about it, and the result was a general feeling of fierce resentment.

That the spirit of revolt should become rampant was not surprising. There were secret meetings held in cells and often in the corridors.

A wholesale escape was being planned. There were those who advocated a more drastic procedure. Escape was not enough for them.

They insisted that every guard guilty of brutality should be punished in a like manner.

Sunday was always a day of complete relaxation at the prison. The inmates were granted more liberties. Taking advantage of this, the convicts, some of them imbued with a feeling of blind hatred against the chief warden in charge, urged that the general revolt planned, should be staged on that day.

It seemed that the chief warden was less observant and less cautious on this particular sunday. He failed to notice that a spirit of unrest dwelled among the crowd of men as they came into the big dining room at noon.

Several trusties, also implicated, had passed word that the main exit had been left unguarded because the

chief warden had allowed several of his assistants to absent themselves.

The prisoners ate their dinner quietly enough. There was no sign anywhere of what was about to happen within the next hour.

The leaders of the disgruntled prisoners were on the alert. Only three guards were on watch. It would be easy to overpower them. Of course, they would use their guns and perhaps a few inmates might be killed.

However, this was not taken very much into consideration. And moreover, if they were quick enough, the guards might not get a chance to use their guns.

Suddenly a voice rose in a shrill cry.

"Let's go!"

That was the signal previously agreed upon. That same instant every man rose and a concerted attack was made upon the guards.

One of them ran toward the door with the intention of giving an alarm, but a heavy dish hurled with great force, struck him on the head and he fell in a heap.

The other two guards made a determined attempt to stem the tide, but they had no chance against this mob of nearly two hundred convicts.

Before they could use their guns, they were overpowered, beaten almost to a pulp, and left bleeding on the floor.

And now, armed with those deadly weapons, two of the ringleaders made straight for the chief warden's office. Here another struggle ensued with the same result.

The keys for the main exit were secured and in a few minutes a general exodus of convicts began. But in the turmoil one guard had been overlooked.

He managed to reach the bell used for spreading the alarm. Its clanging was frightful. At the first

sound every official in the city knew what was taking place.

Police in squads rushed toward the prison.

Police boats in the bay dashed about. Men dressed in prison garb were running up alleys and across the wide streets, madly striving to find a secure hiding place.

Among them was a young man whom we met before. Bob Harding, the automobile mechanic who married Betty Procter, had been confined in this prison.

It will be remembered that he received a sentence of two years for assaulting the superintendent of an automobile plant in Detroit.

So long as he had received the weekly letter from his pretty young wife, he had been satisfied to serve out his sentence. But these peace-laden messages had suddenly ceased to arrive.

What had happened to his Betty? Was she prevented from writing to him by illness, or had she grown tired of the bond which bound her to him? It was this terrible uncertainty, which caused Bob Harding to join the revolt. He was perhaps more anxious to escape than any of the convicts.

With fierce determination to learn the truth, he ran on, taking a path not followed by his fellow prisoners. His teeth were set and his breath whistled through them.

Ah, how he had loved his beautiful Betty. Every thought of her made his heart beat a little faster. What if she had found a lover?

What if she had gone back to her own kind and had been persuaded to procure a divorce? That could have happened easily without him knowing anything about it.

While he felt an inclination to believe the worst, yet something within him argued against it. But he

would know the truth if he escaped without being shot down by pursuers.

Already the crack of rifles and automatic guns could be heard. Hoarse commands reached his ears, and he stopped and looked over his shoulders.

The alley in which he found himself had no outlet. High fences were on both sides. To go back meant sure capture. He glanced about swiftly, and his eyes caught on a door which evidently lead into the rear yards of a dwelling.

With a bound he was through it. Luckily no one was about. To the right was the half finished structure of a garage. A pile of lumber lay to the left. Another swift glance assured him that no workmen were present.

Several more shots fired in rapid succession, and within close proximity, warned him that he was far from being out of danger.

There was no place of refuge in sight, and his heart sank. To be caught now meant several more years at hard labor, and perhaps solitary confinement for having participated in the revolt.

But fate chose to be kind, for suddenly he spied an opening in the fence. It led to what obviously was some children's playhouse.

Without wasting a moment, he got on his hands and knees and crawled in. With the perspiration streaming down his face, he crouched, ready for any emergency.

"They'll never get me alive!" he panted. "I'll die rather than be taken back to that hell-hole!"

All that afternoon Bob Harding hid in that little playhouse. He was so thirsty that his lips were parched and the tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth.

But his capture was inevitable if he crawled out. In this frightful predicament he began to wonder why no one was working at the half finished garage.

Then he remembered that this was Sunday, and no doubt the people living in that dwelling had gone out for a drive. But if they had gone for a drive, they must also return.

What if the children who owned that little playhouse found him there? So far as he was able to judge, quiet had been restored in the city.

This seemed to indicate that the search for the escaped convicts had ended. But Bob Harding could not afford to take any chances.

Physical suffering, even the torture of thirst, was preferrable to what awaited him at the penitentiary if he was caught.

At last night came. Very carefully he left his hiding place and glided along the fence. First his thirst must be appeased.

In his search for a cooling drink he almost fell over a hydrant. With his mouth to the faucet he drank. Ah, how good it was.

Everything was silent about him, which led him to believe that he was far removed from the heart of the city. Being a stranger to the immediate surroundings he could not tell his exact location.

What he did know, however, was, that the city was flanked on one side by Lake Huron. If he could only reach the shore of that lake, he would be safe.

There were a good many private launches lying close inshore. He knew enough about them to be able to operate one even if he didn't have the ignition key.

Like a hunted animal stalking through the wilderness, he moved forward. There was no one in the alley. Following his instinct, he arrived at the lake before he was aware of it.

A flotilla of private launches lay just where he expected to see it. The intense stillness about him worried

him. It was not real.

Although he was quite sure that no one had followed him, he had the unpleasant feeling of someone being near.

There was a wooden pier to his left, just a few feet away. As he swung himself up and reached for a foothold, he got the surprise of his life.

There was a sudden blinding flash of light. Then came the terse command:

"Hands up. We've got you!"

For a second Bob Harding stood there, tall, broad-shouldered and sinewy. His jaw was set and his blue eyes flashed defiantly at the electric radiance that shone into them.

Then with a lightning motion, he wheeled and ran. There was a spatter of revolver shots, and he felt a quick burn, as though a hot coal had touched the tip of his ear.

He reached the street with a lead of two hundred yards, but his exultant confidence was gone.

He was in plain sight of his pursuers. There was a rattle of shots in the air and a chorus of whistles.

He knew that within a few minutes the police would be closing in on him from all sides. He ran very swiftly.

There was just one thing he was grateful for now. New prison regulations had done away with those horrible stripes. Garments made of dark blue serge had replaced them.

The trousers he wore were those worn by free men. They gave no hint of the penitentiary he had left.

A straggler or two in the dark stopped in astonishment and stepped aside to let him pass. He rounded suddenly to the south and quickened his pace. At the next corner he would turn eastward and perhaps elude his pursuers.

But when he reached that corner and he paused a moment, he saw the street light a square away shining upon a policeman's helmet. But that was not all he saw.

That policeman had seen him coming, and he was racing toward him with all the speed he could make.

Bob was afraid to turn to the right or left. His only chance lay in a straight flight. If nobody headed him for four squares he would reach a tenement section.

Within these houses lived people of his class. The thought gave him new courage.

Perhaps three hundred yards ahead the street ended against the high walls of a warehouse. Harding reached this spot. Then all of a sudden he saw the glare of fire and heard the jangle of bells and the quick pant of engines.

It was too late to retreat. His pursuers were coming on behind, shouting and snarling like a pack of hounds.

The crowd was already gathering. Perhaps the confusion might help him. At the corner he paused, stood for a moment and looked around. To the right and left the police were stretching their lines.

Ahead of him, across the street, were the burning buildings. The twelve-story building was blazing on two floors, and the six-story tenement next door was aflame in its first story.

Down the tenement stairway, between the two buildings, the firemen were carrying a fainting woman. Bob Harding saw this at a glance. That same moment an officer stepped up to him.

"I want you, young fellow," he announced, taking a firm hold on the fugitive's arm. "We've cornered all the rest, and you are the only one missing.

Bob did not waste an instant. He shook himself

free and made a dash down the street.

The crowd of people, not knowing just exactly what was going on, took it for granted that the young man was wanted by the police in connection with the fire.

"Stop him!—Hold him!" they shouted, taking after Harding.

There seemed no escape. He doubled back and reached almost precisely the spot he had left a moment ago. Then he saw the door from which the fainting woman had been carried. It was a long chance.

He met the charge of the first policeman with a stiff arm jolt that sent him reeling.

He dodged under the extended arm of the second and crossed the street in a bound. As he tore into the hallway nearly a dozen officers were after him.

Up the steps he went, and when he looked over his shoulder as he paused at the top, he saw that the entrance was filled with policemen.

Then a tongue of flames cut the wall like a knife. It swept across the stairway and a volume of smoke rolled up at him.

At the head of the stairs was a door which Bob closed with a bang. He leaned breathlessly against the wall. For at least a few minutes the rush of the smoke would be stayed.

Running to a side window, he looked into the street. He noticed that several policemen were running to cut off his escape from the rear of the building.

The smoke was pouring through the cracks in the floor. Harding could feel the wood crackling beneath his feet, and he knew that in another minute the flames would be through.

Then he ran up to the next floor, closing the stairway door as he passed it.

Already the blaze was a terrifying one. During

his moments of hesitation in the street, Bob had not thought of what the buildings contained. But now, with a shock of realization he remembered.

The first three floors of it were occupied by a chemical company. The fire would be hot and quick.

In fifteen minutes the entire building would be a furnace—a volcano in eruption. He knew now why the firemen had abandoned the interior when they had removed the last inmate.

Again he ran to the side window and looked down. His quivering jaw set itself again and he turned back. He went up the stairs to the little roof house. The door of it opened to the rear.

On three sides there was a drop of at least ninety feet, with concrete sidewalks and brick-paved court at the bottom.

To his right the wall of the twelve story building rose high into the air. His eyes moved quickly, searching every inch of that wall. There was no handhold within his reach.

Chapter 87

A HEROIC DEED.

BOB HARDING was beginning to realize that the chances of escape were slim indeed. The burning building was surrounded by police officers, who, evidently, supplied with a good description of him, were determined upon his capture. With a pang of regret he thought of his fellow prisoners, no doubt back in the penitentiary awaiting punishment. But he no longer feared rearrest, for no human being could reach him.

The elements had taken a hand, and unless a miracle happened, his life would be snuffed out within a short time. Bob smiled grimly. At least it would be a quick death, for the smoke was merciful.

He would never know it when the roof opened and dropped him down in the blazing crematorium below.

Harding went over the situation cooly enough. No panic seized him. In fact he wondered how it would feel to be suffocated by smoke. Of course, unconsciousness would follow quickly. He hoped it would.

With mechanical steps he went back to the stairway. The smoke was coming up in tremendous volumes. He ran down to close the door at the bottom.

His hand was on the knob. He was drawing the door toward him, when suddenly he stopped.

From down in the hallway, almost lost in the noise of rushing water, the roaring of the flames and the metallic pant of the fire engines, there came something like the wail of a motherless kitten.

With bated breath Bob bent forward and listened.

Again and again it came, and the young man's heart shrunk with terror. It was not the cry of a motherless kitten. It was the cry of a human being—of a child!

"Mama—mama—mama!" the words came to him now clear and distinct. "Please get me, mama!"

Harding's blood froze in his veins.

With a low exclamation he threw open the door and ran into the corridor. There he stopped and listened. Twice he started forward, then back again, not knowing which way to turn.

"Mama—mama!" came the pitiful cry once more.

Bob ran toward the sound. A glare of smoky light shot through the window, and in it he saw a small figure, tangled in a blanket, dragging itself painfully toward him.

"Merciful God!" he gasped.

With one leap he was beside the figure. It was that of a child. He lifted it, blanket and all. Then he felt tiny arms about his neck and a soft face buried below his ear.

"God help me save this little one!" he prayed. "I don't care for myself, but help me save this innocent child."

Turning quickly, he ran back toward the door. He could hear the fire raging on the floor below. Every crack was spitting smoke. The door at the head of the stairway was blistering.

With a cry of rage and disappointment, Bob ran up to the roof. He slammed down the long trap that covered the stairway and stood upon it with both arms about the child.

A velvety hand crept up and stroked his perspiring face. Then he heard something that made him quiver from head to foot.

"Daddy—daddy, oh, my daddy!" the words held a note of joy.

Obviously the child had taken it for granted that it was being rescued by its daddy. With choking sobs Harding held the little one closer to his breast.

"Don't be afraid, you sweet darling," he murmured, for the moment utterly oblivious of the frightful danger which threatened both. "I'll get you out of this if it is the last thing I do on earth."

Bob Harding thought no longer of the penitentiary he had left behind.

He could not even think why he had wanted to escape. There seemed only one thing of real importance now—this child must be saved.

He looked at the brown eyes, at the curling hair, the soft curves of the cheek, and the fighting blood mounted up in his brain.

"Yes, I'll save you!" he panted. "I'll save you!"

He pressed the little one closer for a moment, then laid it gently in a corner and stormed over the roof. As he ran toward the front his foot tripped and he fell, crashing upon his chest.

With a muttered oath he felt for the object that had throw him, drew it toward him, and then sprang to his feet, holding it in his hand.

It proved to be a scaling ladder. Then he leaped to the roof house and seized the blanket. He twisted it into a bag, such as an Indian woman might use, and put the child in it.

He tore loose some clothes lines that fluttered from a post and bound the bundle upon his shoulders like a miner's pack. With a sharp intake of his breath, he ran to the edge of the roof.

Across the airshaft, almost out of reach, was an open window. Bob raised the ladder, tilted it forward

and jumped.

The great hook of wrought iron caught the sill with a jerk that nearly pulled his arms from their sockets. He hung for a moment to get his wind, and then went up the rungs like a cat.

Behind the window was the stairway of the building. It was already full of smoke. To enter it meant suffocation. Harding swung his ladder, caught the sill above, and a moment later thrust his leg through the window and rested.

His only hope now was the roof of the building adjoining the tenement. It was the one in which he found himself now.

If he was quick enough he might descend to the ground by the means of the scaling ladder. Of course, he would be captured by the waiting police, but the child would be safe.

He was sure that the scaling ladder which had brought him to the top, would also take him down again on the other side.

After some painful manoeuvering he suddenly saw the handrail of a fire escape.

But to his bitter disappointment he realized that escape was cut off here. Then he ran to the front of the roof and peered over the cornice down into the street. Through the flame and smoke he could see the fire engines. Firemen were running here and there.

From various points of vantage great streams of water were thrown upon the burning building, but their effect was nothing. Bob could hear the chief bellowing order after order.

Then he felt the child stirring. With a swift movement he swung the bag from his shoulders.

"God help us both," he groaned as he fondled it, then dry-eyed and swallowing a big lump in his throat,

he stared once more at the small, moving objects in the street below.

The child, sensing the danger, began to cry. They were piteous sobs that shook it. Harding was at the end of his wits. It seemed utterly impossible that an innocent human being should suffer a death so horrible.

Placing the little one on the floor, he sprang from side to side and from front to the rear, seeking means of escape, and finding none.

The fire was blazing higher and higher. The smoke whirled up thickly from below and was carried away by a strong wind. The heat had become stifling and Bob wrapped the child in the blanket again in order to protect it as long as he could.

Then, almost in an instant, the wind changed and came tearing from the north. But that did not help him. The flames were raising so high that he was almost completely enveloped.

It was then that frenzy seized Bob Harding. He threw his head back and screamed. He ran to and fro like a trapped rat.

As he lowered his eyes they fell upon something dangling from a heavy spike in the shimney. It was a coil of insulated wire such as electricians use.

With the glimmer of hope it brought him the young man again became his cool self. He took the child and ran toward the front of the building.

Down in the street two police officers were holding a brown-eyed woman who was fighting to reenter the tenement building. Her shrieking voice could be plainly heard as she begged them to save her baby.

Some distance away two other officers were talking in awed whispers.

"That is the end of the poor devil," the first one remarked, "what a fool he was to take such a chance.

The moment I saw him run into that hallway and up the stairs, I knew he would never come out alive."

"Yes," the other agreed, "it's the end of him. But I suppose he preferred death to being returned to prison. I am told that they are being treated brutually by some of the guards. Those fellows who were caught put up a hell of a fight. No doubt——"

The speaker was stopped by a boy of perhaps twelve who ran against him. The boy was excited and he pointed heavenward.

"Look—look!" he cried. "There is someone moving up there!"

But others had seen the same thing, and presently all eyes were strained in the same direction.

Yes, it was the escaped convict. There was no longer any doubt about that.

A queer, hissing groan passed through the crowd as its breath was expelled suddenly from a thousand throats.

High above the street, now hidden by the smoke which eddied across the roof, they saw Bob Harding. He was moving quickly and he was holding something in his hand.

"He is letting something down!" one of the firemen gasped.

At this the woman with the brown eyes emitted a scream. The mother eyes had been keener than those of all the others.

"My baby—my baby!" she sobbed. "Oh, God!"

"Well, I'll be damned," exclaimed a police officer.

"A brave man," murmured another.

"God help him," whispered a third.

But the fire chief had taken the situation in at a glance.

He shouted an order through his trumpet and a

dozen men ran across the street with a life net.

The bundle containing the child was still coming downward slowly, then suddenly it stopped.

Presently another cloud of smoke obscured it.

Then cries for a long ladder went up.

But that was not all. Passionate appeals for anything that might save an imperiled life; prayers to the firemen, prayers to the police—everything of abuse, ridicule and adjuration that a maddened crowd could voice.

They watched and held their breath, for Bob Harding was seen to engage in other tactics.

With aid of a scaling ladder he was making frantic efforts to escape the seemingly inevitable.

Away up in the smoke he looked like a fly. The hook of the ladder was well lodged in the brickwork. He turned and began his descent.

He went down very carefully—very slowly. The window he reached offered him a momentary resting place.

Again he seized the scaling ladder, and again he lodged it securely. Again his descent began in the same careful manner.

From below volumes of water played about him.

"Thank God—thank God!" he murmured, sure at last that he had been seen. "Now if they only have a long ladder!"

The bundle containing the child he kept within reach.

Whenever a tongue of flame threatened, he put it out with his bare hands. The child was crying with all its power.

There was a degree of satisfaction in that at least. So long as it could voice its disapproval of what was going on around it, life was not yet extinct.

The last thing Bob Harding remembered was the

touch of a hand, then a strong grip.

Two firemen had raised a ladder long enough to reach him. While one of them carried the child to a place of safety, he was being held by the other until help from below arrived.

A scene that brought tears to the eyes of everyone present was taking place on the other side of the street. The mother of the child had just come out of a swoon.

When her baby was put in her arms, practically unharmed, her joy knew no bounds.

"Thank God—thank God!" she wept. "My baby —my baby!"

And then, with the child pressed to her heaving bosom, she watched how the firemen carried the brave rescuer to the ground. No one tried to hold her back as she rushed forward to give expression to her gratitude.

But Bob Harding did not feel the kisses she rained upon his swollen face. Neither did he hear the words this happy mother spoke.

Unconsciousness had taken him into its cradling arms, and he was lifted very gently into the police patrol that took him away.

The fire was finally controlled, and the crowd began to disperse. It was satisfied for they had seen a heroic young man save a child from certain death.

Chapter 88

THE SLEEPWALKER.

TWO OF Philip Gordon's great worries had been removed. He had just received a letter from the governess at Miami, Florida, stating that his boy was beginning to show signs of improvement. How welcome this message was no one knew but himself.

After he had read the letter his happy heart could remember but one thing—his dearly beloved boy was on the road to recovery.

Nothing in all his life had worried him quite as much as Harry's protracted illness. And now, thank God, the danger of losing him was apparently over.

Another matter which had caused him considerable uneasiness, was that involving his only sister. And now she was happily married. Ruth would never again be the bone of contention between his wife and himself.

But now he found himself confronted with a problem which required all of his cool reasoning and mental strength.

Recent information disclosed the fact that his first wife was not dead as he had so firmly believed. She was alive and living somewhere in seclusion.

His determination to find her was not only founded on remorse and the desire to make reparation for the frightful wrong done. All the intense love and adoration for Marie had been reborn.

He wanted her more than any other thing on earth. But there were difficulties and obstructions which could not be obviated without causing no end of

trouble.

There was his second wife. Alice was not the woman to meekly submit to a divorce.

But all that did not worry him nearly as much as the scandal that was sure to follow. He spent sleepless nights and days that seemed like an eternity, brooding over the frightful situation.

Finally he came to the conclusion that he would trust to fate. He decided to meet every new phase of the matter as it presented itself.

For one thing he had to reckon with possibilities. Although he possessed convincing proof that Marie was not killed in the explosion at Gary, he was by no means sure of her being still among the living.

He recalled with a bitter pang his vile treatment of her. What if she had taken her own life in a fit of despondency? Women in great mental distress had resorted to this extreme method to end it all.

Since her return from Hollywood, Alice seemed to have undergone a complete change. Her conduct was above reproach.

When he questioned her about having met Willard Parker at the Walling Tea Room in Chicago, she had admitted it amid a shower of repentant tears.

But it had been absolutely by accident, she had insisted. And then she confessed that she had lured him on during the ball at Oak Manor with a definite purpose in view.

"You—you didn't seem to care for me any more," she told Phil sobbingly, "and I wanted you to know that if you didn't, someone else would."

While Gordon felt inclined to take this statement at its face value he could not help being deeply impressed.

Then his attitude toward Alice began to change. In his present predicament he realized the necessity of

conciliatory attitude.

Perhaps she could be persuaded to quietly agree to a separation in case his first wife was found.

And so both endeavored, for the time being at least, to bury the hatchet and dwell in peace. While Gordon's motive for this was obvious, those of his second wife remained shrouded in darkness.

Instead of taking a personal part in searching for Marie, he decided to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the private detectives employed.

In th meantime he would come to a more amicable understanding with Alice. But here Phil showed how little he knew about women.

The woman willing to stand by smiling while another of her sex takes her home and husband was never born.

In his kindness he even countenanced the return of Nora Evans. Again he showed an astounding degree of ignorance—this time of what was going on under his own roof.

The Evans woman had never left Oak Manor, and for a very good reason. But she had managed to keep out of Gordon's way.

"Nora is so indispensable to me that I just must have her back," his wife told him, then added coaxingly: "You won't mind, will you, Phil?"

While he gave his consent grudingly, he gave it nevertheless.

But Nora Evans was indispensable to Mrs. Gordon because both shared the secret of the tower. There were things to be done the latter shrank from.

And because of this secret Alice would never again consent to leave Oak Manor.

One night as Phil was about to retire, he stepped over to the window to open it as he usually did.

As his glance rested casually on the spacious grounds below, he was surprised to see the figure of a woman move in the direction of the tower.

Who she was he could not tell from this distance. Instantly he recalled to mind the incident of some time ago. And again doubt and suspicion assailed him.

"What can anyone want in the tower at this hour of the night?" he muttered, consulting his watch. "It might be a good thing to find out who this woman is. There must be an end to such prowling about."

The woman he had observed was none other than his wife. Ignorant of the fact that she had been observed from the window, she proceeded rapidly.

At the door she stopped and glanced about warily. So far as she could see no one was about. Then the door was opened from the inside, and Nora Evans appeared.

"Is everything alright?" Mrs. Gordon inquired anxiously.

"Yes," breathed the girl.

"May I go up?" Alice said in a whisper. "I must see her and——" she paused abruptly because Nora made a gesture of fright with her hand. "What is the matter?" she gasped.

"Mr. Gordon is coming," Nora quavered. "Good heavens, what'll we do now?"

There was not much time for deliberation. Alice swiftly realized the peril of the situation.

She had succeeded in hoodwinking Phil once in the tower. She knew she could never get away with it the second time. And yet, he must be prevented from making another search at this particular moment.

Alice was in a panic. She clutched at the girl's arm trembling in every limb. If Phil discovered the secret of the tower all was lost indeed.

"Leave it to me," Nora said into her ear. "I'll

manage it."

And before Mrs. Gordon knew what the girl had on her mind she was gone. A few moments later she heard her voice.

"Oh, Mr. Gordon, I am so glad you have come," she cried. "Quick, come with me."

"What is wrong?" he demanded, looking Nora Evans over curiously.

"Your wife—Mrs. Gordon," the girl exclaimed in well feigned terror, "since she came back from her trip. she has been acting so strange at night. More than once I saw her get up and walk in her sleep. She is doing the same thing again now. I followed her here and——"

From where she stodd, rooted to the spot, Alice heard every word. A cunning smile crossed her face. Now she understood what Nora meant when she told her she would manage it.

She took the cue instantly and began groping about with her hands in the manner of a sleepwalker.

Phil swallowed the ruse, bait, hook and sinker. Very carefully he approached his wife. There was not the least doubt in his mind.

He was close enough now to see that her eyes were closed.

Alice moved slowly in the direction of the spiral stairway. Fearing that she ascend and fall, Phil drew an arm about her waist.

"Come with me," he said gently. "You'll hurt yourself."

Then Alice did the expected thing. She emitted a scream and pretended to fall into a dead faint.

Her husband caught her and with the assistance of Nora Evans this smooth faker was carried back to the house.

Obviously concerned, Phil stood at the woman's

bedside, waiting for her to come out of the swoon.

Presently she lifted her eyelids and sat up suddenly with a look of fright.

"Oh, Phil!" she gasped. "What is the matter? What are you doing here?"

"I am afraid you have acquired a bad habit while you were away," he answered.

"Why—why, what have I done?" Her voice was shrill.

"You have turned sonnambulist," Phil told her. "You were trying to explore the tower. If it had not been for your maid's watchfulness there is no saying what might have happened."

Alice looked very serious for a moment, then she smiled. His last sentence expressed commendation of Nora Evans' timely interference.

The latter, standing against the wall a few feet away, was grinning from ear to ear. It was well that her thoughts could not be heard, for they were not at all complimentary to Philip Gordon and his sex.

"I think it would be well for you to consult Dr. Van Buren about this malady," the latter suggested.

Alice shook her head.

"Dr. Van Buren is not fond of me, and I am afraid he is no friend of mine," she returned, her old haughty self again. "I would be just as well satisfied if he never entered the door."

"Why do you dislike him?" he asked, his eyes meeting hers.

"No need discussing that, Phil." Alice put a hand to her mouth to stifle a yawn. "You could hardly expect me to like a man who accused me of being indirectly responsible for our baby's death."

Gordon paled a trifle, and his manner changed.

It pained him to hear his wife speak about this

ragedy without the least feeling. Besides, he knew that he had no right to harbor any ill feeling toward Dr. 'an Buren.

Every accusation he made was just and true.

"I see you are tired and sleepy," he said as he turned to leave the room. "I wish you a very good night."

"The same to you, my dear," Alice replied, forcing back a laugh.

As soon as the door had closed behind Gordon, Nora Evans came forward with an ingratiating air. She had rescued her mistress from a most unpleasant predicament and fully expected to be rewarded.

She was disappointed, however, for Alice buried her lovely head among the pillows and showed no inclination to talk.

But Nora had no intention of quitting the room without receiving some recognition for what she had don,. For a moment she stared at Mrs. Gordon in insolent silence, then she said:

"That was a close shave, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was," Alice agreed. "But I can't say that yours was a very brilliant idea. I could see in my husband's eyes that he did not fall for that sleepwalker gag."

"I think he did," the girl replied sullenly. "And you might at least give me credit for——"

"Alright—alright," the other broke in impatiently. "I'll give you full credit. I am too sleepy and tired to argue with you. Go to bed and forget about it."

Nora Evans gave her mistress an ugly stare, then made her exit in an exasperatingly slow manner.

"You better watch your step, Alice Gordon," she muttered to herself as she began to undress in her room "You'll have to show more appreciation if you expect me to keep on doing the dirty work for you. There would

be the devil to pay if that fool husband of yours found out who is being kept in the tower."

Chapter 89

JEALOUSY

RUTH GORDON, now Mrs. Guy Fillmore lived with her young husband in one of the more exclusive New York apartment hotels. They were still enjoying their honeymoon. She loved her Guy devotedly, and he fairly idolized her. Ruth possessed that strange charm the average man falls for readily.

She was exquisitely proportioned and her face had that singular sweetness which remind one of a big, dark-eyed doll.

While Ruth always remained lady-like in her demeanor, nevertheless she liked admiration.

She always singled out handsome men and when she caught a handsome man staring at her for any length of time he was apt to be rewarded with a smile.

Guy Fillmore good-naturedly countenanced this, although he did not seem very much elated. One of the guests at the apartment hotel was a fine-looking man rather past his youth. He had been very much impressed with Ruth's young beauty. He always managed to come into the dining room when the Fillmores did.

Continued in next number

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were his continual thoughts. Under the impulse of this inspiration he informed the chief of the magical power of these cards, which in possession of an enemy would cause dire disaster to his family as well as himself. Thoroughly frightened the chief gave this treasure to Korn and escorted him to the seacoast far from his place of captivity. After various wanderings and adventures he arrived at the German colony Kameron, where he secured a position on board a Hamburg merchant ship; and through these events we became possessed of the *Genuine Cards*, the handwritten interpretation and instructions how to use them.

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